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7 Reports:

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- New Indon jail for terrorists should stop security breaches
- US may grant Indonesian police direct access to question terror suspect
- Saudi offers counterterrorism cooperation to RI
- CNA: Five Asean members, Australia to enhance anti-terror cooperation
- Malaysian minister calls for an end to stereotyping terrorism with Islam

Indonesia to hold convicted militants in new prison

By Ahmad Pathoni

JAKARTA, March 6 (Reuters) - Indonesia will next month open a prison especially built to isolate militants convicted of terrorism and keep them from communicating easily with supporters or comrades still at large, officials said on Tuesday.

The high security facility off the coast of Java island will not allow inmates access to mobile phones and other means of communications, Indonesia's justice minister told Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer at a security meeting in Jakarta.

Hamid Awaluddin "made it perfectly clear that he was concerned about the way terrorists had been gaining access to the media and to other organisations", Downer told reporters after a regional ministerial meeting on security.

"The Indonesian government rightly wants to deal with that."

Security in Indonesian prisons has been tightened following a revelation that a man on death row for the 2002 Bali bombings had gained access to a mobile telephone and a laptop, allowing him to connect to the Internet and communicate with fellow militants on the run.

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Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said the new prison was located on Nusakambangan island, off the coast of Central Java province.

Nusakambangan currently has three jail houses designated for hardened criminals and people convicted of serious crimes, including corruption.

Indonesia and Australia, which co-chaired the two-day conference, have worked closely ever since the Bali bombings.

Australians accounted for many of the more than 200 people killed in the bomb attacks that targetted foreign tourists.

The 2002 bombings have been blamed on Southeast Asian militant network Jemaah Islamiah (JI). Regional authorities believe it was also behind more recent major bombings.

GREAT KILLING POWER

The security conference discussed ways to prevent militants from obtaining weapons of great killing power such as chemical and biological arms, reinforce law enforcement cooperation and promote interfaith dialogue to counter religious extremism.

Downer said "terrorists have expressed on so many occasions views that they would like to have access particularly to biological and chemical weapons and there's some evidence they've tried to obtain them."

Wirajuda said the region had made substantial progress in countering terrorism but it must remain vigilant. "Terrorism remains a clear and present threat and terrorists are still capable of inflicting severe damage to our communities. They are still recruiting new operatives and developing new strategies and tactics," he said.

Officials said at the start of the meeting that militants were constantly adopting new strategies, including use of technology such as the Internet

The meeting, attended by foreign ministers and police chiefs from six regional countries, is a follow-up to a similar 2004 conference.

Indonesian police have arrested more than 200 militants over the past few years and killed JI's alleged top bombmaker

The six nations believe JI is bent on creating an Islamic state across their territories through a campaign of violence.

Around 85 percent of Indonesia's 220 million people follow Islam, making it the world's largest Muslim population. Most Indonesian Muslims are moderates but there is an radical element as well.

Indonesia to open special prison for convicted terrorists

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JAKARTA, March 6 (AP) -- Indonesia will open a high-security special prison next month for convicted terrorists after authorities admitted jailed militants have access to cell phones and are free to indoctrinate other inmates, Australia's foreign minister said Tuesday.

Indonesian ministers revealed the plan during a regional anti-terror meeting in the capital Jakarta, Alexander Downer told reporters.

"Next month Indonesia will be opening a new prison which is a very high security prison," Downer said. "This will house terrorists, convicted terrorists, and they will not have access to ... tools of modernity. It will be beyond the range, for example, of mobile phones."

The prison will be on Nusakambangan off the country's main island of Java, Downer said.

Indonesian officials were not immediately available for comment.

It was unclear whether the facility will be completely new, or a newly developed wing of an existing high-security prison on the island.

Indonesia has convicted and imprisoned almost 200 militants in recent years as part of its campaign against the al-Qaida linked Jemaah Islamiyah terror group, which is blamed for a series of attacks in the country, including the 2002 Bali bombings.

But lax security at jails has led to at least two instances of imprisoned militants contacting sympathizers outside, either by phone or by e-mail, authorities have said. The prisoners are also allowed to freely mix among themselves and give hard-line religious instruction to other terrorists as well as common criminals, officials and former inmates have said.

New Indon jail for terrorists should stop security breaches

Karen Michelmore

JAKARTA March 6 (AAP) -- Indonesia is building a new prison for terrorists to ensure they can't access mobile phones and the internet to continue planning attacks, Australia's Foreign Minister Alexander Downer says.

The new facility, on an island off Java, will house between 400 and 500 convicted terrorists, Downer said in Jakarta today.

Indonesian authorities last year discovered one of three Bali bombers on death row had been using a smuggled laptop to communicate with supporters from his jail cell.

"Next month Indonesia will be opening a new prison which is a very high security prison," Downer said.

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"This will house terrorists, convicted terrorists, and they will not have access to those tools of modernity.

"It will be beyond the range, for example, of mobile phones."

"It (the prison) sounds like a tough regime for people convicted of terrorism, but then terrorism is a egregious offence."

Speaking at the close of a six nation counter-terrorism conference, Downer said Indonesia's justice minister had expressed concern about the access jailed terrorists had to communications tools.

Indonesia's Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda said prisoners were not allowed to use mobile phones or the internet while in jail, but it was happening anyway.

"We have found that occasionally prisoners have access to cellular phones and the internet," he said.

"Our authorities are conducting raids on prisons and ... those means of communication, cellular phones, are confiscated."

Downer and Wirayuda said the two-day conference was a success.

Discussions ranged from how to counter extremism and the continued "battle for hearts and minds" to how to ensure terrorists don't gain access to chemical and bio-chemical weapons, Downer said.

The countries involved in the gathering agreed to hold a follow-up counter-terrorism seminar later this year.

BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific
March 6, 2007

US may grant Indonesian police direct access to question terror suspect

Source: Media Indonesia, Jakarta, in Indonesian 5 Mar 07

Text of report by Indonesian newspaper Media Indonesia website on 5 March

[Unattributed report: "Polri Obtains 'Access' to Question Hambali"]

Jakarta - Media Indonesia Online: Indonesian Police Chief General Sutanto has stated that Polri [Indonesian Police] has obtained 'access' [as received] to question terror suspect Hambali, who is currently being detained in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"What's clear is that (the FBI) has provided us with 'access'. Now, we just have to determine whether this will be via written correspondence or a direct meeting," Sutanto said in Jakarta on Monday [5 Mar].

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Although it has obtained 'access', Polri will await confirmation before sending police personnel to Cuba.

Sutanto stated that it would be better if they could question Hambali directly, rather than send a list of questions, so that investigations could be more in-depth.

"We want to send our personnel there. [Investigations] would be limited if we just sent a list of questions. They would be more in-depth if we questioned him directly."

Saudi offers counterterrorism cooperation to RI

JAKARTA, March 6 (Antara): The Saudi Arabian government offered a conterterrorism cooperation to Indonesia, Indonesian Religious Affairs Minister Maftuh Basyuni said Tuesday

The offer was made by visiting Saudi Arabian Minister for Islamic, Alms, and Propagation Affairs Sheikh Saleh bin Abdul Aziz bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Seikh.

Maftuh hailed the offer to cooperate in counterterrorism, whose area include fighting against radicalism. There were no details about the cooperation.

Apart from offering cooperation on counterterrorism, Saudi also offered cooperation on the management of alms, and Islamic propagation.

Channel NewsAsia March 6, 2007

Five Asean members, Australia to enhance anti-terror cooperation

JAKARTA: Five Asean members and Australia have agreed to step up cooperation to combat terrorism in the region.

Among the new areas identified are community dialogue to eradicate radical ideology and tighter surveillance of weapons and substances that can be used by terrorists.

The agreement came at the end of a two-day anti-terror conference jointly hosted by Indonesia and Australia.

Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore were the other countries that participated in it.

The leaders of the five Asean members and Australia concluded that there is much to be done against terrorism despite achievements in the last three years.

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Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Australia have joined hands in the fight against terror by strengthening enforcements and legal frameworks.

The region will now be looking at ways to curb the movement of weapons, such as portable anti-aircraft guns and chemical substances that can be used by terror groups.

Leaders also agreed to step up inter- and intra-faith dialogue in an effort to root out radical ideology.

Australia's Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, said: "So it's not just a question of having tough laws, effective police and customs and so on. It's also a question of making sure that we win the hearts and minds battle - all of us."

Indonesia on its part is also carrying out rehabilitation programme for former terrorists.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said: "In Indonesia, we have rehabilitation programmes to bring them to the true path and not to choose violence and terrorism. And many of them have come forward to help the police."

But there are still concerns about lax security in Indonesia's prisons where convicted terrorists are detained.

Detainees were able to gain access to mobile phones and the internet to communicate their ideology from inside prison walls.

Indonesia now plans to house convicted terrorists in a new high-security prison which is expected to be ready next month.

Mr Downer said: "The Indonesian government quite rightly wants to deal with that. I must say I'm very heartened and very impressed. I can't speak for what the prison would be like, but it being built now and it's on an island of the coast of Java, it sounds like tough regime for people convicted of terrorism."

The two-day conference did not outline specific details of their continued cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts.

But suffice to say, the broad areas announced demonstrated the governments' resolve in tackling terrorism and its emerging threats in the region.

BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific March 6, 2006

Malaysian minister calls for an end to stereotyping terrorism with Islam

Source: Bernama website, Kuala Lumpur, in English 5 Mar 07

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Text of report in English by Malaysian news agency Bernama website

[Report by Mohd Nasir Yusoff: "M'sia Wants Stereotyping Of Terrorism With Islam To Stop"]

JAKARTA, March 5 (Bernama) - Malaysia wants the inclination of the West and their media to stereotype terrorism with Islam to stop and be eliminated immediately to prevent a jaundiced perception by the world of the majority of Muslims who have never supported terrorism.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the use of terms by Western leaders and media such as "Islamic terrorists", "Islamic extremists" and "establishing an Islamic caliphate" hurt the feelings of peace-loving Muslims.

"Similarly 'Islamic jihadists', which in Islam gives a very good and positive connotation of a struggle for good or positive purpose, has been misused and misinterpreted," he told a press conference at the end of the first day of the Sub-Regional Ministerial Conference on Efforts Against Terrorism here today.

In explaining Malaysia's views on anti-terrorism efforts at the conference, attended by ministers from six countries in the region, he said Malaysia wanted the negative terms and perception not to be linked to all Muslims.

"Stereotyping makes Muslims, particularly in the Middle East, to feel that they are being collectively penalised when in fact they practise the true Islamic teaching that never encourages terrorism," he said.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia's views were welcomed by foreign ministers who were there, including Alexander Downer of Australia, which jointly hosted the two-day conference with Indonesia. The conference was a follow-up to a similar conference in Bali in February 2004.

On the level of cooperation between the six participating countries, namely Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore, in dealing with terrorism so far, Syed Hamid said the ties were very good especially in terms of the exchange of intelligence information which enabled the preliminary steps to be taken.

"The cooperation between the police and security forces of the countries and also other ASEAN countries was generally very good," he said and added that the conference also discussed ways to deal with the new mass media that used Internet to spread terrorism ideology.

On the bilateral meeting with Downer, Syed Hamid said they also discussed peaceful resolution of issues in the Middle East, the United States' stance in efforts against terrorism besides agreeing that the Malaysia-Australia cooperation in various fields had been getting better.

Syed Hamid also held a bilateral meeting with Singapore's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Balaji Sadasivan.

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Salam hangat.

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